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AUTHOR Wood, Robert W.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the status of elementary social studies in South Dakoa in relation to: (1) instructional time; (2) instructional strategies; (3) the use of the textbook and other materials; (4) the availability of professional growth resources; (5) specific subject and skill areas of emphasis; and (6) the professional perceptions of principals toward curriculum and instruction. Findings indicated that time spent teaching social studies in South Dakota elementary schools was less than national trends. The textbook was the predominant material used in teaching social studies, while supplementary materials used most were maps/globes, audiovisuals, and teacher-prepared materials. Common instructional strategies were discussion, group projects, field trips, and games. Areas that received extra emphasis in social studies were citizenship at the K-2 grade levels, American Indian education and citizenship at the grade 3-4 levels, and geography at the grade 5-6 levels. Economics received little emphasis at all grade levels. Few elementary schools received the journals "Social Education", "The Social Studies" or "Social Studies and the Young Learner" as professional growth resources. Principals ranked social studies and science as the least important subject areas in terms of their schools commitment when compared to reading, mathematics, and language arts. Text includes four statistical tables and four graphs. The survey instrument and cover letter are appended, and a 20-item bibliography is included. (Author/JB)

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Status of Social Studies Education in South Dakota Elementary Schools

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Robert W. Wood

Mitchell R. Chapel

Robin M. Fritsch

Ralph G. Olawsky

Robert S. Perdaems

Diane M. Reinke

Dorothy M. Richardson

Jacque A. Tone

The School of Education

The University of South Dakota

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the status of elementary social studies in South Dakota public elementary schools. Specifically, the study asked questions which addressed the amount of time spent in social studies instruction, the instructional strategies implemented, the types of materials used in teaching social studies, opportunities available for professional growth, the content and skill areas emphasized, and the perceptions held by principals toward social studies in general.

Findings indicated that time spent teaching social studies in South Dakota elementary schools was less than national trends. The social studies textbook was the predominant material used in teaching social studies, while supplementary materials used most were maps/globes, audio visuals, and teacher-prepared materials. Common instructional strategies were discussion, group projects, field trips, and games. Areas that received extra emphasis in social studies were citizenship at the K-2 grade levels, American Indian education and citizenship at the grade 3-4 levels, and geography at the grade 5-6 levels. Economics received little emphasis at all grade levels. Few elementary schools received the journals Social Education, The Social Studies, or Social Studies and the Young Learner as professional growth resources. Principals ranked social studies and science as the least important subject areas in terms of their schools commitment when compared to reading, mathematics, and language arts.

INTRODUCTION

Social studies instruction in the elementary curriculum is meant to provide students the opportunity to study the "political, economic, cultural and environmental aspects of societies in the past, present, and future" (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS] Task Force, 1989, p. 15). It is expected that with social studies instruction, students will be better prepared to understand and participate in a society "characterized by increasingly rapid social and technological change" (NCSS Task Force, 1989, p. 14). Yet, as the NCSS position statement suggested, "elementary social studies, especially in the primary grades, continues to suffer a decline in emphasis" (NCSS Task Force, 1989, p. 20). Similarly, the South Dakota K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Guide (1981) acknowledges that, "social studies has emerged as one of the most comprehensive, confusing, and promising areas of the curriculum during the past decade. Students, educators, and the public hold broad, conflicting and demanding expectations for the Social Studies" (p. ii).

PURPOSE FOR STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the status of social studies education in South Dakota classrooms, Kindergarten through sixth grade . The study examined the status of social studies related to: (1) instructional time; (2) instructional strategies; (3) the use of the textbook and other materials; (4) the availability of professional growth resources; (5) specific subject and skill areas of emphasis; and (6) the

professional perceptions of principals toward curriculum and instruction.

NEED FOR STUDY

In order to make decisions concerning elementary social studies instruction, teachers and administrators must be aware of past and present practices. Unfortunately, no recent data were available to provide information about curricular scope and sequence, instructional time, methods and materials, or related issues pertinent to social studies instruction in the elementary schools of South Dakota. The results of this study should provide informative data for elementary teachers and administrators when examining the social studies curriculum in South Dakota school districts.

DELIMITATIONS

1. The study was limited to principals responsible for grades K-6 in public elementary and middle schools in the state of South Dakota.
2. The sample was limited to the perceptions, attitudes and opinions held by public elementary school principals toward selected social studies topics and questions.
3. The study was limited to a time period from February 1, 1989, to May 1, 1989.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social studies is an essential part of the basic education of all elementary students (NCSS Task Force, 1989). It provides a foundation of knowledge, attitudes, and skills to help children understand the

changing society in which they live. A central part of a child's social development is an understanding of human interaction, family functions, and societal values (Michaelis & Rushdoony, 1987). In addition, social studies provides opportunities for children to make constructive decisions and become productive citizens in a changing and demanding world.

However, social studies often receives inadequate emphasis in elementary schools (Hahn, 1985). Some schools even leave social studies out of the elementary curriculum entirely (Goodlad, 1984). The lack of social studies instruction at the elementary level has been a concern for many years. While in 1977 it was reported that elementary teachers were backing away from the social studies (Gross, 1977), as of 1985 elementary teachers were still avoiding the teaching of social studies, especially in the primary grades (Hahn, 1985).

In 1977, a study entitled SPAN (Social Studies/Social Science Education: Priorities, Practices, and Needs) was conducted by the Social Science Education Consortium (SSEC) and sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The purpose of the SPAN study was to "synthesize and interpret recent research on social studies education and to submit a series of reports on the current state of social studies" (Superka, Hawke, & Morrissett, 1980, p. 363).

The results of the SPAN study indicated that the average amount of time spent on social studies instruction was approximately 20 minutes per day at the K-3 levels compared with 40 minutes for math and 95

minutes for reading. In grades 4-6 social studies received approximately 34 minutes per day compared with 51 minutes for math and 66 minutes for reading (Weiss, 1978). Many educators felt that greater instructional time should be devoted to reading, writing, and arithmetic (Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1979). In addition, about two-thirds of the K-3 teachers in the SPAN study indicated that inadequate time to teach social studies was a significant problem (Weiss, 1978).

The materials used in social studies instruction vary, but the dominant tool is the textbook (Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1979). The SPAN study reported that approximately one-third of elementary teachers used textbooks that were more than seven years old (Weiss, 1978). The SPAN study also reported that in grades K-3, 65% of the classes used textbooks, and in grades 4-12, 90% of the social studies classes used one or more textbooks (Weiss, 1978). Further, most social studies curricula have been based on published textbooks (Lengel & Superka, 1982). Although state education departments and local school districts produce curriculum guides, teachers tend to disregard them (Patrick & Hawke, 1982). Across the nation the dominant pattern of curriculum organization by grade was as follows: Kindergarten (self, home, school, and community); grade 1 (families); grade 2 (neighborhoods); grade 3 (communities); grade 4 (state history and geographic regions); grade 5 (U.S. history); and grade 6 (world cultures) (Lengel & Superka, 1982). "In the majority of cases, the social studies curriculum comprises the concept, facts, attitudes, and skills

presented in the basal textbook used in a particular course" (Patrick & Hawke, 1982, p. 39). Teachers reported that they lack the time to develop their own materials (Patrick & Hawke, 1982). The supplementary materials used most often were maps, globes, and charts (Weiss, 1978).

The most widely used teaching technique in the instruction of social studies was lecture (Fancett & Hawke, 1982). Teachers in grades K-3 used lecture on a daily basis approximately 20% of the time, and teachers in grades 4-6 used lecture approximately 24% of the time (Weiss, 1978). Discussion was used over 60% of the time in all grades (Superka, Hawke, & Morrissett, 1980). Goodlad (1984) reported that lecture and recitation, reading textbooks, and completing worksheets dominated social studies instruction.

In the past some concepts were considered too difficult for elementary students. The National Council for the Social Studies, however, has identified four content and skill areas that elementary students are capable of understanding. These included time and space concepts, economic understanding, social perspective, and civic understanding (NCSS Task Force, 1989).

Children in elementary school can understand and learn geography and history concepts. Young children who are active participants in a well organized learning environment can learn complex thinking processes and concepts of geography (Muessig, 1987). "The study of geography provides information on the spatial variation of the cultural and physical elements that make each place on earth

unique" (Michaelis, 1988, p. 138). "Social studies provides a sense of history, a sense of existence in the past as well as the present" (NCSS Task Force, 1989, p. 16). Levstik (1986) found that children who are introduced to historical data in the fictional form showed greater interest in and enthusiasm for history and were receptive to further investigation in more traditional sources.

Elementary students can learn basic economic concepts. Armento (1986) indicated that a child's informal learning can be used as a basis for formal development of critical-thinking skills and for the construction of useful and powerful economic knowledge. Schug and Armento (1985) stated that elementary children are capable of economic reasoning and are developing basic economic understanding.

Children are influenced by peer groups, adults, social and educational environments, experiences, and the institutions to which they are exposed (NCSS Task Force, 1989). "Positive attitudes toward differences among families, various occupations, adherence to rules and laws, members of various groups, and producers of goods and services are emphasized in family and community studies and are extended in later studies" (Michaelis, 1988, p. 361). Classroom environments which foster citizenship education and give children opportunities to participate in civic experiences help children transfer these learnings to community life (Anderson, 1980).

The skills related to maps and globes are of primary importance to the social studies (NCSS Task Force, 1989). Other skills taught through

social studies include: "communication skills such as writing and speaking; research skills such as collecting, organizing, and interpreting data; thinking skills such as hypothesizing, comparing, drawing inferences; decision-making skills such as considering alternatives and consequences; interpersonal skills such as seeking others' points of view, accepting responsibility, and dealing with conflict; and reading skills such as reading pictures, books, maps, charts, and graphs" (NCSS Task Force, 1989, p. 16).

Shaver, Davis, and Helburn (1979) stated that "the teacher is the key to what social studies will be for any student" and that "the day-by-day classroom experiences of students emerge from teachers' beliefs about schooling and social studies in particular, their knowledge of the subject area and the available materials and techniques, and how they decide, consciously or not, to put these together for instruction" (p. 151). Based on the SPAN study, 95% of elementary teachers felt qualified to teach reading and math, while only 39% felt qualified to teach social studies (Eslinger & Superka, 1982). Elementary teachers view other teachers, local inservice, professional journals, and college courses as useful sources of information about social studies (Weiss, 1978). Weiss (1978) reported that 39% of teachers in grades K-3 and 47% of teachers in grades 4-6 found social studies journals very useful. Further, 44% of teachers in grades K-3 and 38% of teachers in grades 4-6 listed inservice as very useful. Teachers found local subject specialists useful only 28% of the time at the grades K-3 levels and 17% at the grades 4-6 levels.

Educators have an opportunity to introduce elementary students to social studies concepts that will help them understand their changing and expanding world. "In a world that demands independent and cooperative problem solving to address complex social, economic, ethical, and personal concerns, the social studies are as basic for survival as reading, writing, and computing" (NCSS Task Force, 1989, p. 21).

SAMPLE

The population for this study was the total number of public elementary school principals in the state of South Dakota. It was determined that a random sample would not be drawn, but rather the entire population would be included in the study. Principals serving more than one elementary school were asked to respond only once.

On March 25, 1989, an initial mailing of questionnaires, cover letters, and postage-paid return envelopes was sent to 286 South Dakota elementary school principals. One month later a follow-up post card was mailed to each non-respondent. Ultimately, 164 questionnaires were returned within the assigned 6-week time frame for a final response rate of 57%.

INSTRUMENTATION

The source of data for this study was a questionnaire consisting of 14 multiple choice and yes/no questions, 10 Likert-type statements, and four open-ended short answer questions (see Appendix A). Entitled "Social Studies Education in South Dakota Elementary Schools" the

instrument was created by the study team, field tested by non-participating elementary school principals, and modified prior to use.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Approximately 98% of the respondents reported teaching social studies from a textbook. While Silver Burdett, Ginn, and Heath were identified as the most widely used textbook series (see Table 1), 14 additional series were also cited. Some principals reported the use of more than one textbook series. Copyright dates from 1982 to the present were reported 84% of the time while copyright dates prior to 1982 appeared 16% of the time.

Table 1

Most Frequently Used Social Studies Textbooks

Publisher[a]	n
Silver Burdett	40
Ginn	31
Heath	21
Macmillan	12
Holt	11
Follet	10

Note. Total number of respondents = 161.

[a]Publishers receiving 10 or more responses.

In reference to time spent in social studies instruction per week (see Table 2), the most common responses were as follows: grades K-2 (31-60 minutes); grades 3-4 (61-90 minutes); and grades 5-6 (more than 120 minutes).

Table 2

Instructional Time

	Grade levels		
Minutes per Week	K-2	3-4	5-6
0-30	0.18	0.020	0.00
31-60	0.47	0.201	0.12
61-90	0.18	0.329	0.14
91-120	0.14	0.215	0.25
More than 120	0.03	0.235	0.49

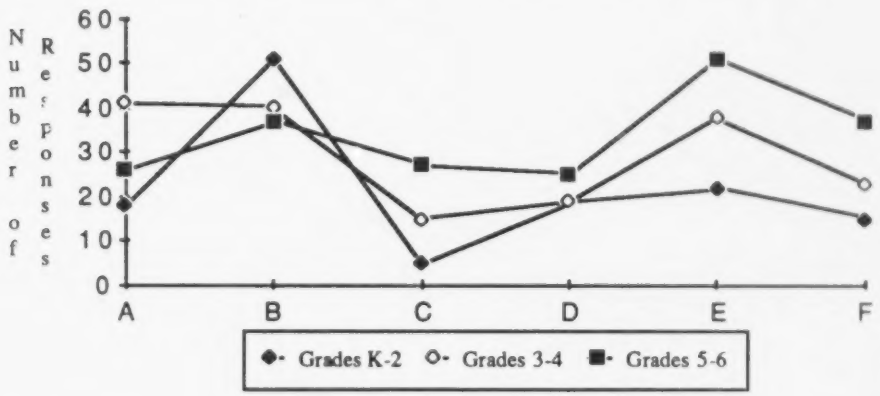
Note. Values represent percentage of respondents per grade levels.

Ninety-three percent of the respondents reported the existence of a district K-6 plan of study for social studies, while use of the state Division of Education curriculum guide was cited by 44%. In 25% of the

schools a social studies chairperson/coordinator was also indicated. Nearly one-quarter of the principals (23%) reported having had a social studies inservice during the 1988-1989 school year.

Given a list of specific content areas of the social studies curriculum (see Figure 1) principals indicated that extra emphasis was placed on citizenship in grades K-2 and geography in grades 5-6. While citizenship and geography also received extra emphasis in grades 3-4, American Indian education received slightly greater emphasis at those grades.

Figure 1. Areas of emphasis in social studies instruction.

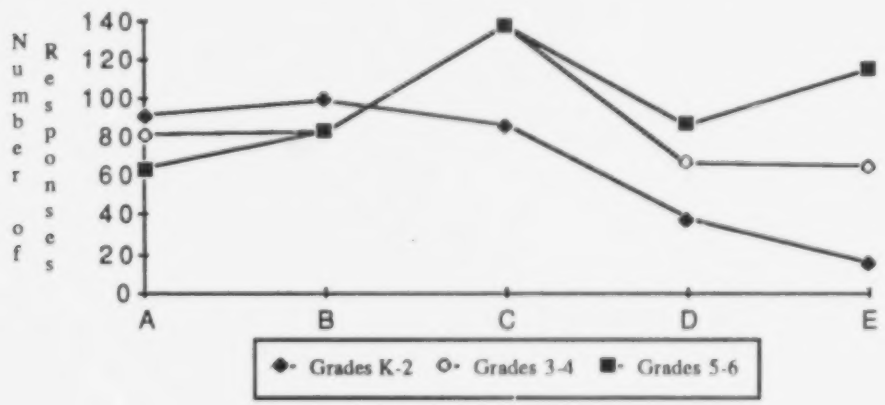


A American Indian Education
B Citizenship
C Economics
D Environmental Studies
E Geography
F Global Studies

In a related question, while over 85% of the respondents reported that South Dakota history was taught in grades 4-6, 5% indicated that it was not taught at all. Some principals noted that instruction in South Dakota history was provided in all grades during the 1988-1989 academic year as a result of the 1989 South Dakota Centennial.

Similarly, principals reported that map/globe skills (see Figure 2) were the most commonly taught skill areas in grades 3-4 and 5-6, while in grades K-2 communication and human relations skills were most commonly taught. Research skills and problem solving were taught least in grades K-2 and 3-4 but were commonly taught in grades 5-6.

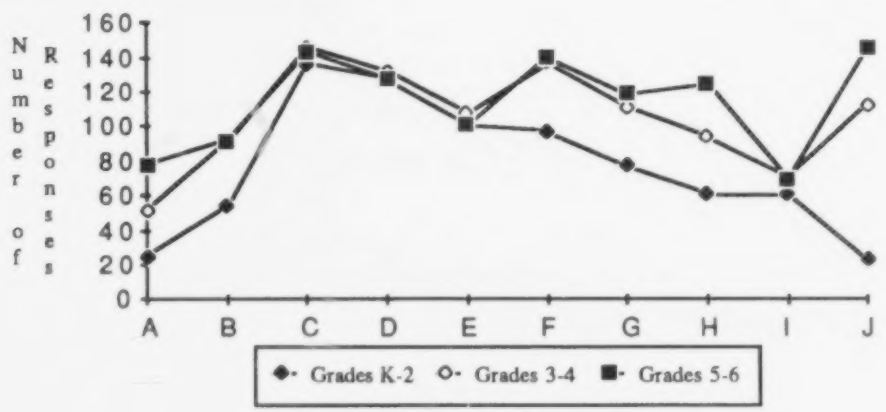
Figure 2. Additional skill areas taught in social studies.



A Communications
B Human Relations
C Map/Globe Skills
D Problem Solving
E Research Skills

When queried about instructional strategies (See Figure 3), principals reported that the use of discussion and field trips received prominent emphasis at all grade levels. Role playing, computer assisted instruction, and cooperative learning received less emphasis at all grade levels.

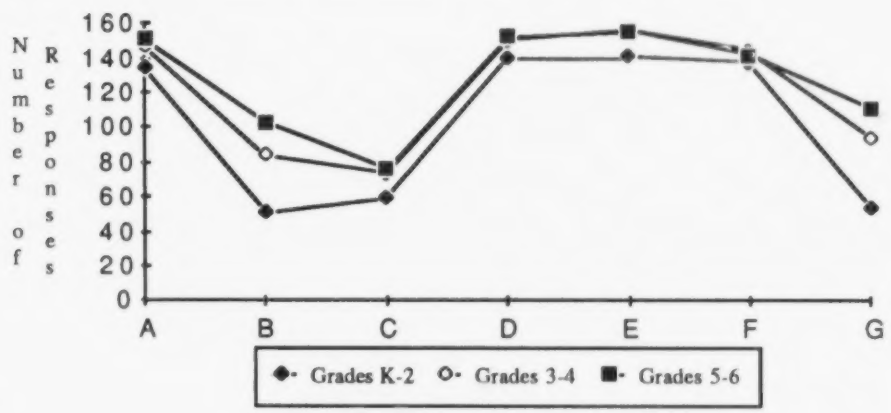
Figure 3. Instructional strategies used in social studies.



A Computer Assisted Instruction
B Cooperative Learning
C Discussion
D Field Trips
E Games
F Group Projects
G Guest Speakers
H Lecture
I Role Playing
J Written Reports

In reference to supplementary materials (see Figure 4), audio/visuals, globes, maps, and teacher-prepared materials received near-equal emphasis in all grades.

Figure 4. Supplementary materials used in social studies.



A Audio/Visuals
B Computers
C District-Generated Materials
D Globes
E Maps
F Teacher-Prepared Materials
G Workbooks

When rank-ordering their school's commitment to five subject areas (see Table 3), the majority of principals rated social studies and science fourth and fifth, respectively; neither was rated first or second. Reading was overwhelmingly rated first and was never rated lower than third. It should be noted that 29 questionnaires (18%) were answered incorrectly and not reported in the analysis of this question.

Table 3

Subject Area Rank Order

Subject	Responses per rank				
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Language arts	3	31	92	7	2
Mathematics	1	101	32	1	0
Reading	131	3	1	0	0
Social studies	0	0	5	65	65
Science	0	0	5	62	68

Principals were also asked if their schools received the journals, Social Education or The Social Studies. Only five (3%) subscribed to the former, while nine (5%) subscribed to the latter. However, four voluntarily reported receiving Social Studies and the Young Learner.

Table 4 presents the principals' responses to ten Likert-type questions dealing with selected issues in the social studies curriculum. The levels of agreement ranged from (5) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree. The range of means for the ten questions was 2.35 to 3.67. Seven of the ten mean values were in the 2.35 to 2.85 range which would indicate a tendency toward disagreement with the statements. Three

statements received mean values in the range of 3.00 to 3.67 which indicated a tendency toward agreement with the statements.

Table 4

Principal Perceptions About Social Studies

Question	n	Mean[a]
I am pleased with the way our students perform on the social studies section of the Stanford Achievement Test.	163	3.67
The quality of the social studies program in out school is excellent.	164	3.59
Students would rank social studies as one of their favorite classes.	164	3.00
Teachers are frequently expressing a need for more instructional materials in the social studies area.	164	2.85
The teacher and the class should decide what they want to learn in social studies.	163	2.82
Learning the content is the major function of the social studies program.	162	2.52
Of all the subjects in the curriculum, I believe social studies would be ranked as the favorite among teachers.	162	2.52
The textbook should be the primary determinant of what is taught in social studies.	164	2.40
Teachers frequently review the South Dakota social studies curriculum guide for suggestions.	162	2.39
Textbook writers know more about social studies than elementary teachers, so they, rather than teachers, should determine what is taught.	164	2.35

Note. Relates to Likert-type questions. [a]Values ranged from (5) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree.

In analyzing the statements which received the highest and lowest mean values, elementary principals were "pleased" with the way students performed on the social studies section of the Stanford Achievement Test and believed that the quality of the social studies program at their school was excellent. Also, the principals did not believe that textbooks should be the primary determinant of what is taught in social studies and surmised that textbook writers might not be the right people to determine what is taught in the social studies curriculum.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the status of elementary social studies in South Dakota public schools. Specifically, the study asked questions which addressed the amount of time spent in social studies instruction, the teaching strategies implemented, the type of materials used in teaching social studies, the availability of professional growth resources, the content and skill areas emphasized, and the perceptions of principals about social studies in general.

Instructional Time

The results indicated that instructional time spent in social studies increased with grade level. However, it appeared that time spent teaching social studies in South Dakota was less than national trends (Weiss, 1978). South Dakota principals participating in this study reported that the greatest problem with social studies instruction was

the lack of time available to teach it. Some stated that "language arts and math take priority."

Instructional Strategies

The instructional strategies used in social studies instruction varied. The top four strategies listed at the K-2 levels were discussion, field trips, games, and group projects. The top four strategies listed for grades 3-4 and 5-6 were discussion, field trips, group projects, and written reports. Discussion appeared to be a strategy used often at all levels, which was consistent with the SPAN study results. The South Dakota study did not attempt to determine how often lecture was used in instruction.

Materials

In keeping with the SPAN national survey which found that the textbook was the most frequently used method of instruction (Weiss, 1978), 98% of the participating South Dakota principals reported that the social studies curriculum in their school was taught from a textbook. However, it is interesting to note that the same principals indicated slight disagreement with the textbook being the primary determinant of what is taught.

The top three choices of textbooks used in South Dakota were Silver Burdett, Ginn, and Heath. While the SPAN national study reported that one-third of elementary teachers used textbooks that were more than seven years old, the South Dakota study reported that only 16% of the participating schools used textbooks more than seven years old.

The study reported that South Dakota history was most often taught in grade six. This was inconsistent with the typical textbook placement of state history at the fourth grade level (Lengel & Superka, 1982). It should be noted, however, that the placement of state history may have been effected by the South Dakota Centennial celebration which occurred during the year of this study.

The South Dakota Curriculum Guide was used 56% of the time. Some principals reported lack of knowledge of this guide. Supplementary materials used most at all levels were maps/globes, audio visuals, and teacher-prepared materials. Supplementary materials used least at all levels were computers, district-generated materials, and workbooks.

Professional Growth Resources

This study indicated that only 3% of the participating schools received the journal Social Education. This may be due to the fact that many of the articles and ideas contained in Social Education are designed for secondary teachers. Consequently, elementary teachers many not find the journal helpful. The National Council for the Social Studies has recognized this problem and has published a new journal entitled Social Studies and the Young Learner. Four principals voluntarily reported that their schools did receive this journal. Another area that would provide teachers with knowledge about social studies was inservice training. While the South Dakota study indicated that nearly a quarter of the schools held a social studies inservice

during the 1988-1989 school year, this may have been the result of preparation for the 1989 South Dakota centennial celebration.

Content and Skill Areas

The specific areas of the social studies curriculum that received extra emphasis were citizenship at the K-2 levels, American Indian education, citizenship, and geography at the 3-4 levels, and geography and global studies at the 5-6 levels. Economics received little or no attention at all grade levels, which could be attributed to the belief that this subject is too difficult for elementary children to understand. It should be noted, however, that 40% of the respondents reported that no area of the social studies curriculum received extra emphasis.

A skill area that was commonly taught at all grade levels was map/globe skills, which was consistent with current national practices (NCSS, 1989). Communication and human relations skills received more emphasis at the lower grades whereas research skills and problem solving were more typical of grades 5-6. It appears that elementary principals perceive that citizenship-related skills are more important in the lower grades while thinking skills are important for the upper grades. This seems to follow the theory that as children develop cognitively they are more capable of research and problem solving.

Perceptions of Principals

Principals rated social studies and science as the least important subjects in terms of their school's commitment when compared to reading, mathematics, and language arts and confirmed this in their

written comments. This appears to be consistent with current public opinion that reading, writing, and arithmetic should be top priorities of elementary education.

When principals were asked what they perceived to be the greatest problem with social studies instruction in their schools, many responded that teachers reported a lack of time to teach social studies. The following statements reflected this thought: "Even with 45 minutes a day, we don't have enough time to cover what we like", "short on time to adequately teach social studies", and "lack of time - language arts and math take priority." When asked what they perceived to be the strongest aspect of social studies instruction in their schools, principals emphatically responded with "teachers". Statements such as "teacher dedication", "good teachers", and "teacher involvement" appeared often and reflected a trend found in this study.

SUMMARY

This study sought information about specific aspects of social studies curriculum and instructional methods at the elementary level. The findings indicated that the predominant instructional material used to teach social studies in South Dakota was the textbook; discussion was the most used teaching strategy. Social studies content areas that received extra emphasis were citizenship at the K-2 grade levels, American Indian education and citizenship at the grade 3-4 levels, and geography at the grade 5-6 levels. Economics education received the least amount of emphasis at all grade levels while map/globe skills

received strong emphasis at all grade levels. The amount of time spent teaching social studies varied but was considerably less at all grade levels than national trends.

The study also sought opinions and perceptions of elementary school principals in South Dakota about selected issues in social studies education. The principals reported that the strongest aspect of the social studies program was teachers' committmment to social studies, whereas the greatest problem with social studies instruction was lack of time available to teach it. Further, the study indicated that social studies was not a priority subject in elementary schools, as principals ranked it low in terms of their school's commitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study suggest that elementary schools in South Dakota should rely less on a textbook dominated social studies curriculum and use a greater variety of instructional materials and strategies. Students should be involved in experiential learning that encourages critical thinking and application.

Also, a much greater amount of time must be devoted to social studies instruction at all grade levels. While more easily suggested than remedied, it should be recognized that South Dakota elementary schools appear to provide considerably less instructional time in social studies than national trends.

Finally, elementary schools should evaluate their commitment to social studies by providing increased opportunities for professional

development such as inservice training and availability of resource materials and professional journals. As one of the participating principals stated, "Social studies will never be any stronger than the commitment and time we give it."

The time to re-evaluate social studies education is now. "The task before us is to establish the criteria and create the basis for a new social studies that preserves the best of past and current practice, but also addresses emerging realities and 21st-century prospects and needs for the social education of citizens in our ever-changing and globally linked society" (Schneider, 1989, p. 153).

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APPENDIX A

Social Studies Education in South Dakota Elementary Schools: A Status Survey

SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: A STATUS SURVEY

1. Is your social studies curriculum taught from a textbook?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

   If Yes, what textbook series is used?

   _____

   If Yes, what is the copyright date of this textbook? (Choose only one)
   - ☐ 1988-1989
   - ☐ 1985-1987
   - ☐ 1982-1984
   - ☐ 1979-1981
   - ☐ Before 1979

2. Does your district have a K-6 Plan of Study for social studies?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

3. Does your school use the South Dakota Social Studies Curriculum Guide?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

4. Does your school have a person designated as a social studies chairperson/coordinator?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

5. When was the most recent district-provided social studies in-service activity for elementary school teachers? (Choose only one)
   - ☐ 1988-1989 School Year
   - ☐ 1987-1988 School Year
   - ☐ 1986-1987 School Year
   - ☐ 1985-1986 School Year
   - ☐ Prior to 1985-1986 School Year

6. At what grade level(s) is South Dakota history taught? (Choose as many as apply)

- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ Grade 1
- ☐ Grade 2
- ☐ Grade 3
- ☐ Grade 4
- ☐ Grade 5
- ☐ Grade 6
- ☐ Not Taught

7. How much instructional time is spent on social studies in most classrooms per week?

	Grades K-2	Grade 3-4	Grades 5-6
0-30 minutes	☐	☐	☐
31-60 minutes	☐	☐	☐
61-90 minutes	☐	☐	☐
91-120 minutes	☐	☐	☐
More than 120 minutes	☐	☐	☐

8. Does your school provide extra emphasis in specific areas of the social studies curriculum?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If Yes, indicate which one.

	Grades K-2	Grades 3-4	Grades 5-6
American Indian Education	☐	☐	☐
Citizenship	☐	☐	☐
Economics	☐	☐	☐
Environmental Studies	☐	☐	☐
Geography	☐	☐	☐
Global Studies	☐	☐	☐
Other_____	☐	☐	☐

9. Which other skill areas are taught in social studies instruction. (Choose as many as apply)

	Grades K-2	Grades 3-4	Grades 5-6
Communication	☐	☐	☐
Human Relations	☐	☐	☐
Map/Globe Skills	☐	☐	☐
Problem Solving	☐	☐	☐
Research Skills	☐	☐	☐
Other_____	☐	☐	☐

10. Which instructional strategies are used in social studies? (Choose as many as apply)

	Grades K-2	Grades 3-4	Grades 5-6
Computer Assisted Instruction	☐	☐	☐
Cooperative Learning	☐	☐	☐
Discussion	☐	☐	☐
Field Trips	☐	☐	☐
Games	☐	☐	☐
Group Projects	☐	☐	☐
Guest Speakers	☐	☐	☐
Lecture	☐	☐	☐
Role Playing	☐	☐	☐
Written Reports	☐	☐	☐
Other_____	☐	☐	☐

11. What supplementary materials are used in social studies instruction?

	Grades K-2	Grades 3-4	Grades 5-6
Audio/Visuals	☐	☐	☐
Computers	☐	☐	☐
District-Generated Materials	☐	☐	☐
Globes	☐	☐	☐
Maps	☐	☐	☐
Teacher-Prepared Materials	☐	☐	☐
Workbooks	☐	☐	☐
Other_____	☐	☐	☐

12. As the principal, rank-order your school's commitment to the following subject areas in order from (1) Most Important, to (5) Least Important.

____ Language Arts
____ Mathematics
____ Reading
____ Science
____ Social Studies

13. Does your school receive the journal *Social Education*?

☐ Yes
☐ No

14. Does your school receive the journal *The Social Studies*?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Please respond to each of the following statements using a range from (5) Strongly Agree to (1) Strongly Disagree.

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
15. Textbook writers know more about social studies than elementary teachers, so they, rather than teachers, should determine what is taught.	5	4	3	2	1
16. The teacher and the class should decide what they want to learn in social studies.	5	4	3	2	1
17. The quality of the social studies program in our school is excellent.	5	4	3	2	1
18. Teachers are frequently expressing a need for more instructional materials in the social studies area.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I am pleased with the way our students perform on the social studies section of the Stanford Achievement Test.	5	4	3	2	1
20. Students would rank social studies as one of their favorite classes.	5	4	3	2	1
21. The textbook should be the primary determinant of what is taught in social studies.	5	4	3	2	1
22. Learning the content is the major function of the social studies program.	5	4	3	2	1
23. Teachers frequently review the South Dakota Social Studies Curriculum Guide for suggestions.	5	4	3	2	1
24. Of all the subjects in the curriculum, I believe social studies would be ranked as the favorite among teachers.	5	4	3	2	1

Please provide a short answer (1-2 sentences) for each of the following.

25. What do you perceive to be the greatest problem with social studies instruction in your school?

26. What do you perceive to be the strongest aspect of social studies instruction in your school?

27. If you could, what aspect of the social studies program in your school would you change?

28. In preparing a summary report it is important to present some concluding remarks that best summarize the status of social studies in South Dakota. Please provide a quote that describes your perception of social studies in your school.

APPENDIX B

Letter to South Dakota Elementary School Principals

March 22, 1989

Dear Elementary School Principal:

There is a serious lack of information regarding the status of elementary social studies instruction in South Dakota. I receive weekly calls asking what textbooks are being used, how much time is spent teaching social studies, what are the most frequently used teaching techniques, etc. Unfortunately, I can only offer opinions not facts. I prefer to offer information based on solid knowledge generated from elementary schools in South Dakota.

In order to construct a data-gathering instrument that would produce the results needed, seven graduate students working on M.A. and Ed.D degrees were selected to work with me. We have spent considerable time developing and testing our instrument.

Enclosed is a copy of our social studies status survey. It would be greatly appreciated if you would take time from your busy schedule to complete it. This survey is vital to understanding what is happening to social studies in South Dakota! Individual responses will be kept in strict confidence. Only information about the entire state will be reported. Your participation will represent an important source of data to the elementary schools of South Dakota.

Your cooperation in completing and returning the enclosed survey on or before April 12, 1989 would be sincerely appreciated. A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for returning the instrument.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Wood
Professor
School of Education

Instrument designers:
Bob Perdaems
Mitch Chapel
Robin Fritsch
Diane Reinke
Ralph Olawsky
Jacque Tone
Dorothy Richardson